

was eight days on the one side or the other of the ascertained average day, a circumstance indicating that the prediction should state the fortnight of confinement. Thus it is seen that the intervals between insemination and parturition, and between menstruation and parturition, have no standard length, but vary within certain limits.

As regards the protraction of the period of pregnancy, the author holds that while absolute proof of the prolongation of real pregnancy beyond its usual limits is still deficient, yet there is evidence to establish the probability that it may be protracted beyond such limits, to the extent of three or four weeks, or even longer.

All the conclusions of Dr. Duncan are deduced from elaborate statistical tables, 131 in number, constructed with great care and with an apparently earnest endeavour to eliminate error. The book is a model of the statistical method of research, and reflects great credit upon the ability and industry of its author, and we earnestly commend its perusal to all interested in the subjects which it embraces.

I. M. H.

ART. XXXIX.—*Bloodletting as a Therapeutic Resource in Obstetric Medicine.*

By FORDYCE BARKER, M.D., Clinical Professor of Midwifery and Diseases of Women in the Bellevue Hospital Medical College, Obstetrical Physician to Bellevue Hospital, etc. etc. 8vo. pp. 14. (Reprinted from the N. Y. Medical Journal, January, 1871.)

In the present pamphlet, which embraces the essay read by Dr. B. before the N. Y. County Medical Society, Dec. 5, on the subject of bleeding in obstetrical practice, he discusses the all-important question of the value of the lancet as a preventive and curative agent for the accidents and diseases of the pregnant female, during gestation, parturition, and the succeeding puerperal state. When we consider the extent to which bloodletting was carried by the leading obstetricians of the olden time, both for the attainment of remedial and preventive ends, compared with its almost entire abandonment by those of modern times, the question naturally suggests itself, Which pursued the right track? It will be found, as Dr. B. correctly remarks, that all the standard authorities who, in Great Britain and America, thirty-three years ago, guided the practice of obstetrics, recognized bloodletting as a therapeutic agent, demanded on a long list of morbid conditions constantly occurring during gestation, parturition, and to the close of the puerperal period, in which its use is now neglected as useless, if not positively condemned as injurious—this reaction being brought about even before the idea became prevalent that a change had taken place “in the type” of diseases. But was the propriety of so complete a reaction sustained by the results of clinical midwifery? Were, as Dr. B. inquires, our predecessors, in their profuse use of the lancet, all wrong? Are we, in our present almost entire proscription of it in obstetrical practice, all right? “For my own part,” remarks Dr. B., “within a few years past, I find, as my clinical experience becomes more enlarged, I am gradually getting to bleed more frequently.” And he thinks he is justified in so doing by the results of the practice. In the pamphlet before us he has endeavoured to present a correct appreciation of the true value of bloodletting in accidents of pregnancy, the complications of pregnancy, and the diseases of the puerperal state. The views of Dr. B.,

in their general bearing at least, are unquestionably correct. A careful perusal of the facts and arguments adduced by him in favour of a more frequent use of the lancet in obstetrical practice will be found suggestive and practical, even though we may not be prepared to acknowledge the validity of every proposition he has set forth.

D. F. C.

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ART. XL.—*A Practical Treatise on Fractures and Dislocations.* By FRANK HASTINGS HAMILTON, A.M., M.D., LL.D., Professor of the Practice of Surgery, with Operations, in Bellevue Hospital Medical College, etc. Fourth Edition, revised and improved. Illustrated with three hundred and twenty-two wood-cuts. 8vo. pp. xxiv., 789. Philadelphia: Henry C. Lea, 1871.

UPON its first appearance this book was elaborately reviewed in the number of this Journal for April, 1860, and the work is so well known to the profession that the present edition does not call for any extended notice at our hands. Since its issue from the press, it has taken a place among the standard works in medical literature, and three editions having been exhausted, we welcome with pleasure the fourth, as evidence on the part of the profession of a proper appreciation of the value of Professor Hamilton's labours.

We are glad to see that the size of the volume is not materially increased, as we cannot but deprecate the unwieldy bulk which so many books acquire with advancing age, a result which is generally attained from a disinclination to cut out old matter, the product of early labour, in order to make room for what is new. Some thirty-three illustrations have been added, and Dr. Hamilton tells us that nearly one-fourth of the entire number have been changed, many new and original wood-cuts taking the place of the old ones; among which latter class are some taken from Dr. Bigelow's treatise on the Mechanism of Dislocations and Fractures of the Hip. In the same connection the author says: "Since Sir Astley Cooper wrote, probably no one man has thrown so much light upon the subject of hip-joint accidents, or contributed so much towards an accurate and systematic plan of treatment, as the distinguished Boston surgeon."

We regret to see that Dr. Hamilton still claims credit for Dr. Crosby for bringing prominently before the notice of the profession the use of adhesive plaster as a means of extension—we say we regret to see this statement repeated, as the reviewer of Dr. Hamilton's book in this Journal, eleven years ago, demonstrated the error into which the author had fallen. It is unnecessary for us to go over the argument again, as there is no reason to suppose that a repetition of the demonstration would have any effect, and the profession at large, having reaped the advantage of Dr. Wallace's expedient, does not, perhaps, feel much further interest in the matter. When speaking of fractures of the patella, what appears to us to be a very insufficient reference is made to the views of Mr. Hutchinson upon this subject, as set forth in his paper contained in the fifty-second volume of the *Medico-Chirurgical Transactions*, nor is any mention made of the theory of the London surgeon, that the principal factor in producing separation of the fragments is not contraction of the quadriceps extensor femoris, but intra-articular pressure dependent upon effusion into the joint. But we had no intention to criticize, especially do we not desire to do so when there is so little to object to, and we will merely say, by way of conclusion, that the book is as good as it has always been, and is in